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the fire, while no one was looking. Before going on to that period, the narrative will tell a little about the birth of

Twins (*Olonjamba*).[1] 'If twins are born, when they have finished cutting (the cords of) the navels they bury their placentas out of doors at a cross-road. After washing and anointing them with oil, they shout saying, *Ulú! Ulú! Ulú!* There have come here a man and a woman. When the people come, they begin while yet outside (the hut), to curse[2] (and continue) until they enter, cursing the parents. It is called *Ongombo*, The Diviner's Basket. In that way such children are followed about by all, that none of them may die. And all the time that such children are growing, it is done month by month. The parent comes out and begins to curse the people who are in the village, and then all come from their houses and follow cursing her.'

In the case of triplets, when they are weaned, one is given to the king.[3]

As soon as the midwives have finished their task, the father may come in and take up the child, but men do not 'like' to hold a child which is still 'red' (i.e. not yet black) and whose 'neck is not yet strong'. Should a woman abort (*pulumuisa*), or should the child be stillborn or die at birth, the loss is accepted philosophically, quoting the proverb:

Cinene ombenje akolovi hacimueko.
The main thing (is) the gourd jug, the shavings (are) nothing.

Should the mother also die, then they quote:

Olūsī ka kuatele, ocimunga ca enda lovava.
A fish (he) did not catch, the bracelet went with water.

Should a young woman complain that her baby is too small, the others may remind her:

Esaila olio osanji.
The egg that (is) the chicken.

Should she complain that her baby does not grow properly, they will say:

Ka ci kuli omōlā ombia, omōlā omunu o kula
It does not grow the child of (a) pot, (the) child of (a) person grows.

[1] Lit., Elephants. The reference is to the names given to twins: *Njamba* (Elephant), *Hosi* (Lion), or *Ngeve* (Hippopotamus).

[2] *Tuhālā*, which literally means to call *hard* names.

[3] I knew of one such case in Civaka.

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the way they gather firewood (*tiaña olõhuĩ*) and dig beer-root (*ombundi*) for the child's beer. When they come to the village they stir up his gruel and feed him.'

In the afternoon and evening the baby's father may hold him, but he is not likely to do so with any regularity until a little later. The European clothing worn by the men is harsh to the baby's tender skin as compared with the soft warmth of his mother's body. His elder sibling or cross-cousin holds and carries him, but whenever he cries his mother will take him up and nurse him. Indeed European or American mothers are considered very cruel to let their babies cry so endlessly. It goes almost without saying that feeding schedules would be considered as quite needless complications. It seems that feeding baby when he cries is more than a mere pacifier. He is credited with *knowing* when he wants to suckle, in spite of the fact that he will only take other food and drink if forced to.

'As to recognition of people, there are two sorts: first the child recognizes only the *smell* of his father and his mother since they sleep with him. But when six months have passed, then he begins to recognize his father and his mother "by heart".[1] He will very soon recognize his elder sibling (*huvaye*) or the cross-cousin (*epalume*), his young nurse (*naveleka*, lit. mother of carrying), and before long the others of the village will be known to him. But during this period only his mother is of real importance to him.' Only in case of her death would other women nurse him.[2] Even when there is a young nurse it is the mother who 'must care for him a great deal and since he has not as yet any sense, she must prevent him from doing everything which he wishes to do'.

At some time between six and twelve months, according to the child's development or the inclination of the parents, in order 'to accustom the child to sit, the parent digs a little hole in the ground just the size of his buttocks that he may not fall over. There they always place him and if he starts to fall over, they set him up again, until finally he sits up properly by himself and does not fall over. At that time he snatches at everything to play with it or to put it in his mouth.'

[1] *Utima*, the heart, is considered the seat of the intelligence.

[2] It is a curious fact that older women, although at the time without children themselves, may again produce liquid in the mammary glands if they take a baby to nurse. I do not believe that a test of such liquid has ever been made.

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The Sitting Baby or Toddler (*Ocisembe*)

856 When a child can sit alone there begins a new period in his life. He is no longer a baby (*oñaña*) but an *ocisembe*. In comparison with the period just passed his development is now rapid, although in comparison with American children it seems slow, for an Ocimbundu child is held and carried so much that walking comes late, rarely or never before twenty-four months. In other respects, however, his physical development is not behind that of other children. His talking may come even *more* rapidly than with many.

Crawling (*oku yaila*). 'Crawling begins with reaching for what he sees: he moves little by little until he gets it. There are two kinds of crawling: some children in order to crawl hold the ground with their hands and doubling up one leg they drag themselves along. That sort of crawling is called *ocela*,[1] or crawling like a lion (*oku yaila ndohosi*). In the second, some children plant all their feet and hands on the ground while their buttocks go up and they move, but not like an animal. That crawling is described saying, He goes as an ox (*enda ngombe*).'[2]

Teething (*Oku tunda ovayo*). 'When a child has seven months then his teeth begin to come out. First when his gums swell the child has a little fever and diarrhoea and he squirts much saliva from the mouth. They call it the squirting of saliva (*oku pamba ovate*). Then a little tooth begins to show in the lower gum, then another, and so it goes on until in his mouth they come together.' The appearance of teeth in the upper gum first is a bad omen and is much feared.

Speech. 'When a child begins to speak, at first he only scolds and nothing is understood. Then he begins to say, *Ta-ta*, *ta-ta* until he calls, *Tate* (my father). Afterwards he will say, *Maĩ* (my mother). It is much more difficult for a child to say *Maĩ* than *Tate*. Thus they say that if a child begins with *Maĩ*, he will become a fool and be unable to speak any more. When he can say these names well, he begins to pronounce the names of the people

[1] From the game *ocela* in which the counters are moved from one hole to another.

[2] The reference is especially to the stiff walk of the unbending hind legs, but also to the deliberate gait of the ox. It is believed that the way in which a child crawls is some indication of what his character will be. The deliberation and openness of the ox are contrasted with the cunning and slyness of the lion.

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in the household and then the names of all kinds of little objects until his speech is perfected.'

Weaning (*Oku sumūhã* or *oku nyamūhã*). Every day the child goes to the fields with his mother. As he grows and gets fatter and heavier he becomes quite a burden for her or for his young nurse. Until he has passed twelve months, however, there is no alternative, and more often his daily excursions continue well past his second birthday. When he is able to walk a little, then his mother may begin to leave him in the village with his young nurse while she goes to her field-work. 'So in the morning at daybreak his mother will give him his food on a little dish and the toddler (*ocisembe*) will eat until he is full. Then his mother will speak to him saying, Suckle (*Nyama*) for I am going to the veld; so he will suckle and his mother will go.' He will not suckle again until she returns at from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. Thus he begins to be weaned quite unconsciously, but that does not mean that the process will be finished quickly; it may continue for even more than two years yet, unless a younger brother or sister intervenes.

'Some children, however, do not stop suckling quickly and if that is the case, his mother will frighten him when he wants to suckle, for she will say, Look out, here is a bugaboo; for perhaps she will have put an ugly worm on her breast, or perhaps she will have rubbed on pepper and the child nursing will burn his mouth and begin to cry. But some children are shrewd so that when they taste the bitterness they will fetch water and wash the breast and it is very hard to wean them. The parent will try many different things until the child is weaned. Some children are only weaned after they are four years old or even older, but that is not common.'

As the preceding paragraph suggests, children of this age may be tyrants to their mothers and all the more since the Ovimbundu punish their children with reluctance. But field-work presses inexorably and much more can be accomplished without a child to hinder one. His mother may promise that if he doesn't cry she will bring him a rat or a bird. Then if he still does not *consent* to stay she may, with reluctance, apply the sterner measures of a slap or a proverb said in exasperation:[1]

Ove oku ku pīkila ku kuta.
You, making for you mush, you do not fill.

[1] The serious regard for the spoken word must be kept in mind.

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relative after whom he is named.(1)

(b) Ordinarily the baby is named by the father from his family. According to Ennis,(2) the first male child is usually named after the paternal grandfather, the first female child after the paternal grandmother; the next two or three children are named after paternal uncles and aunts, and then the mother may choose a name. Childs writes that the name may be given by the mother if the father's family has a bad record of deaths and illnesses. 553

(c) The name must not prejudice but assist the child's chance of survival; thus a child born after the death of several siblings may be given an insignificant name, intended to cause the spirits to overlook it, or to consider it less than human.

(d) Events or persons prominent at the birth may influence the choice. A namesake, whether intentional or not, is known as *Sando* (from the Portuguese word for saint). Events at the time of birth may be summed up in a proverb, of which the key word is the name. Ennis gives numerous examples of such names.(3)

(e) The same names may belong to several families of a type, e.g. trading or farming families, or the families of paramount chiefs, who were jealous of their names and did not permit their use by commoners. 551

Parents take the name of their first-born: thus "Nanjamba" is "the mother of Njamba". During illness a person may change his name to draw away the attention of the spirits. Adolescents discard their birth names and choose new ones.(4)

Infancy

During the first six months the child sleeps with his mother and during the day is carried in a cloth on her back, and fed whenever he demands milk. If the mother has no helper, she works in the fields with the baby on her back. An older sister or other young relative may play with the infant within hearing distance of the mother. 853

Between six and twelve months the child is taught to sit; when he can do this he is no longer a baby *(onana)* but an *ocisemba* (toddler). A child rarely walks before the age of 24 months, since he is carried and held so much. 851

Weaning: a child goes every day with his mother to the fields; each month he becomes fatter and heavier, but he usually continues like this until after the second birthday. When he can walk, he may be left during the day with his young nurse (elder sister, cross-cousin or other relative) and not fed until the mother returns during the afternoon. The process of weaning begins then at this stage but is usually not completed till a year or two later, unless another baby intervenes. Those who take longer than usual in weaning may, however, be frightened away from the breast.(5) 862

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.87.
(2) 1945.
(3) op.cit.
(4) Childs, loc.cit.
(5) Childs, op.cit., p.93.